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1964/08/06

c/Thomson

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Comm China

PT PLS PASS MOSCOW.

ACTION IMMEDIATE DEPT 143 INFO BANGKOK 22 MOSCOW 1 SAIGON 46 TAIPEI 24 TOKYO 35 VIENTIANE 17 CINCPAC UIN PARIS 13 LONDON 22 FROM HONG AUGUST 6, 3:37 P.M.

√ Bundy

CINCPAC FOR POLAD.

FOLLOWING ARE CONSEN COMMENTS ON CHICOM STATEMENT OF AUGSUT 6:

1. IF STATEMENT IS ANY GUIDE TO CHICOM INTENTIONS -- AND THIS, OF COURSE, MUST REMAIN A MOOT POINT PENDING FURTHER EVIDENCE--

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By LHW, NARS, Date 8/8/78

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PEIPING DOES NOT NOW INTEND IMMEDIATE, UNMEASURED, OR SWEEPING ACTION IN RETALIATION FOR US ATTACKS ON DRV PT BASES AND NAVAL FORCES. ALTHOUGH STATEMENT SOMBRELY CHARGES THAT AS RESULT OF SURPRISE BOMBING ATTACKS BY US NAVAL AIRCRAFT ON AREAS OF NGHE AN, HON GAY, AND THAN HOA (THE PHRASE "COASTAL TOWNS" IS ALSO USED) US "WENT OVER BRINK OF WAR" AND "MADE FIRST STEP IN EXTENDING WAR IN INDOCHINA," AND ALTHOUGH FOR FIRST TIME IT ASSERTS THAT "AGGRESSION BY US AGAINST DRV MEANS AGGRESSION AGAINST CHINA," STATEMENT STILL RETAINS UNSPECIFIC NATURE OF EARLIER CHICOM WARNINGS AS TO PRECISELY WHAT MEASURES CPR MAY TAKE TO SUPPORT DRV IN ITS "FIGHT AGAINST AGRESSION."

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JUSTIFY ANY MEASURES THAT MIGHT BE TAKEN BY CPR SINGL. OR JOINTLY IN RESPONSE TO DAMAGE INFLICTED ON DRV NAVAL FORCES AND INSTALLATIONS--THOUGH IT COULD ALSO SERVE THAT PURPOSE--AS TO A) WARN STRONGLY AGAINST ANY FUTURE ATTACKS OR PROVOCATIONS DIRECTED W DRV, AND B) PUBLICLY ESTABLISH STRONGEST POSSIBLE MORAL CASE AGAINST US. STATEMENT CONCLUDES THAT "US GOVERNMENT MUST IMMEDIATELY STOP ITS ARMED PROVOCATIONS AGAINST DRV AND ITS ARMED ENCROACHMENTS ON LATTER'S SACRED TERRITORY, AIR CPM NOT NOW US DRV PT US NGHE AN HON GAY THAN HOA US US DRV CPR DRV NOT CPR DRV A) DRV B) US US DRV

SPACE, AND TERRITORIAL WATERS. (BEGIN UNDERLINE) OTHERWISE, (END UNDERLINE) US GOVERNMENT MUST BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL THE GRAVE CONSEQUENCES ARISING THEREFROM." (OUR UNDERLINING)

3. AUGUST 6 PEOPLE'S DAILY EDITORIAL, WHICH REITERATES PLEDGE THAT "CHINESE PEOPLE WILL NOT SIT IDLY BY WITHOUT LANDING A HELPING HAND," FURNISHES FURTHER EVIDENCE OF CHICOM'S DESIRE AT THIS POINT TO RETAIN FREEDOM OF MANEUVER IN DEALING WITH CRISIS. IN THREE SUCCESSIVE SENTENCES IT STRESSES RIGHT OF (BEGIN UNDERLINE) DRV AND NORTH VIETNAMESE PEOPLE (END UNDERLINE) "TO HIT BACK IN SELF-DEFENSE AGAINST ARMED ATTACKS OF US" AND "TO REPULSE ENEMY, WHEREVER HE COMES FROM." EDITORIAL ADDS THAT IF US (BEGIN UNDERLINE) "KEEPS ON (END UNDERLINE) EXTENDING ARMED AGGRESSION" AGAINST DRV, (BEGIN UNDERLINE) "HEROIC VIETNAMESE PEOPLE (END UNDERLINE) WPPUNDOUBTEDLY CONTINUE TO PUNISH US ....." (OUR UNDERLINING).

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4. [illegible] TO PROVE THAT A) AGGRESSION WAS PRE-MEDITATED AND PART OF LARGER PLAN WHICH INVOLVED JULY 30 SHELLING OF 2 DRV ISLANDS AND AUGUST 1-2 BOMBING OF DRV BORDER POST AND VILLAGE BY PLANES FROM LAOS, AND B) SECOND TONKIN GULF INCIDENT "NEVER OCCURRED" AND WAS FABRICATED IN ORDER EXTEND WAR IN INDO CHINA. THIS THEME AMPLIFIED IN AUGUST 5 OPN US 3 6 NOT DRV US US DRV US 4 A) 5N 2 DEV 1-2 DRV LAOS B) TONKIN 5

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ARTICLE BY "HSINHUA CORRESPONDENT" WHICH POINTS OUT ALLEGED INCONSISTENCIES IN US ACCOUNTS OF AUGUST 4 INCIDENT. IN ITS EFFORT TO MAKE THIS CASE, HOWEVER CHICOM STATEMENT SHOWS AWKWARDNESS IN ARRANGING "FACTS." STATEMENT IN AT LEAST ONE RESPECT DIFFERS NOTABLE IN NUANCE FROM DRV STATEMENT, NAMELY IN STATING THAT IN AUGUST 2 INCIDENT "US SIDE HAD SUFFERED NO LOSSES." THIS TACIT ADMISSION THAT US-DRV NAVAL ENGAGEMENT OCCURRED IS AT VARIANCE WITH DRV CLAIM THAT THEIR PATROL SHIPS "CHASED ENEMY SHIPS OUT OF TERRITORIAL WATERS" AND RETURNED TO BASE.

5. FURTHER ELEMENT IN STATEMENT, AS WE SEE IT, IS DIRECTED IN LARGE PART AT SOVIETS. ASSERTION THAT "NO SOCIALIST COUNTRY CAN SIT IDLY BY WHILE (DRV) IS BEING SUBJECTED TO AGGRESSION" AND OF EQUATING AGGRESSION AGAINST DRV WITH THAT AGAINST CHINA SERVES AT ONCE TO JUSTIFY CHINESE POSITION, PUT SOVIETS ON SPOT VERSUS REST OF COMMUNIST WORLD AND PERHAPS TO ELICIT SOVIET SUPPORT.

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CONFERENCE, BUT WE FEEL THAT THIS IN NO WAY PRECLUDES INTENSIFIED CHICOM PRESSURE FOR EARLY NEGOTIATIONS. LOCAL COMMUNIST WEN WEI PAO COMMENTARY AUGUST 5 CONCLUDES WITH CALL FOR US ACCEPTANCEOF ..-POWER CONFERENCE AND PEACEFUL NEGOTIATIONS.

CFN HSINHUA US 4 DRV 2 US NO US-DRV DRV 5 NO DRV DRV 6 NOT 14 NO WEN WEI PAO 5 US 14 .

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7. ALTHOUGH CHICOMS HAVE THUS SOUGHT TO RETAIN THEIR FREEDOM OF MANEUVER WHILE PUTTING BEST PUBLIC FACE ON EPISODE, WE EXPECT CHICOMS TO TAKE STEPS OF TANGIBLE SUPPORT FOR DRV, PROBABLY IN SPHERE OF AIR DEFENSE AND POSSIBLY IN SUPPORT OF DRV MOVES IN SOUTH VIETNAM AND LAOS.

8. ONE POINT OF PARTICULAR CONCERN LOCALLY IS UNPRECEDENTED LINKING OF SEVENTH FLEET MOVEMENTS FROM TAIWAN STRAITS AND HONG KONG WITH OPERATIONS DIRECTED AGAINST DRV. WE DO NOT AT THIS TIME INTERPRET THIS AS SIGN OF IMPEFING STRONG PRESSURE AGAINST COLONY, BUT WE DO BELIEVE CHINESE MAY EXPLOIT ANY CONSPICUOUS 7TH FLEET ACTIVITIES RELATED TO HONG KONG IN NEAR FUTURE. IN FACT, BRITISH COMMODORE HAS ALREADY DRAWN THIS CONCLUSION, AND WE MAY EXPECT SPECIAL SENSITIVITY, FOR A WHILE AT LEAST, ON THIS SCORE.

GP-3.

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CFN 7 DRV DRV LAOS 3 DRV NOT 7TH GP-3

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TRANSCRIPTION FOLLOWS

Page 1

(Pt Pls Pass Moscow.

Action Immediate Dept [illegible] Info Bangkok 22 Moscow 1 Saigon 46 Taipei 24 Tokyo 35 Vientiane 17 CINCPAC UNN Paris 13 London 22 from HKong August 6, 3:38 P.M.

Bundy

CINCPAC for Polad

Following are CONGEN comments on CHICOM statement of Augsut [sic] 6:

1. If statement is any guide to CHICOM intentions -- and this, of course, must remain a moot point pending further evidence --

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Peiping does not now intend immediate, unmeasured, or sweeping action in retaliation for US attacks on DRV PT bases and naval forces. Although statement sombrely charges that as result of surprise bombing attacks by US naval aircraft on areas of Nghe An, Hon Gay, and Than Hoa (the phrase "coastal towns" is also used) US "went over brink of war" and "made first step in extending war in Indochina," and although for first time it asserts that "aggression by US against DRV means aggression against China," statement still retains unspecific nature of earlier CHICOM warnings as to precisely what measures CPR may take to support DRV in its "fight against aggression."

[----------text missing----------]
justify any measures that might be taken by CPR singly or jointly in response to damage inflicted on DRV naval forces and installations -- though it could also serve that purpose--as to A) warn strongly against any future attacks or provocations directed w[sic] DRV, and B) publicly establish strongest possible moral case against US. Statement concludes that "US Government must immediately stop its armed provocations against DRV and its armed encroachments on latter's sacred territory, air

space, and territorial waters. (begin underline) Otherwise, (end underline) US government must be held responsible for all the grave consequences arising therefrom." (our underlining)

3. August 6 People's Daily Editorial, which reiterates pledge that "Chinese people will not sit idly by without landing [sic] a helping hand," furnishes further evidence of CHICOM's desire at this point to retain freedom of maneuver in dealing with crisis. In three successive sentences it stresses right of (begin underline) DRV and North Vietnamese people (end underline) "to hit back in self-defense against armed attacks of US" and "to repulse enemy, wherever he comes from." Editorial adds that if US (begin underline) "keeps on (end underline) extending armed aggression" against DRV, (begin underline) "heroic Vietnamese people (end underline) wppundoubtedly [sic] continue to punish US ....." (our underlining).

4. [illegible] to prove that A) aggression was premeditated and part of larger plan which involved July 30 shelling of 2 DRV islands and August 1 - 2 bombing of DRV border post and village by planes from Laos, and B) second Tonkin Gulf incident "never occurred" and was fabricated in order extend war in Indo China. This theme amplified in August 5

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Article by "Hsinhua correspondent" which points out alleged inconsistencies in US accounts of August 4 incident. In its effort to make this case, however CHICOM statement shows awkwardness in arranging "facts." Statement in at least one respect differs notable [sic] in nuance from DRV statement, namely in stating that in August 2 incident "US side had suffered no losses." This tacit admission that US - DRV naval engagement occurred is at variance with DRV claim that their patrol ships "chased enemy ships out of territorial waters" and returned to base.

5. Further element in statement, as we see it, is directed in large part at Soviets. Assertion that "no socialist country can sit idly by while (DRV) is being subjected to aggression" and of equating aggression against DRV with that against China serves at once to justify Chinese position, put Soviets on spot versus rest of Communist world and perhaps to elicit Soviet support.

[----------text missing----------]
conference, but we feel that this in no way precludes intensified CHICOM pressure for early negotiations. Local communist Wen Wei Pao commentary August 6 concludes with call for US acceptance of [illegible]-power conference and peaceful negotiations.

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7. Although CHICOMS have thus sought to retain their freedom of maneuver while putting best public face on episode, we expect CHICOMS to take steps of tangible support for DRV, probably in sphere of air defense and possibly in support of DRV moves in South Vietnam and Laos.

8. One point of particular concern locally is unprecedented linking of Seventh Fleet movements from Taiwan Straits and Hong Kong with operations directed against DRV. We do not at this time interpret this as sign of impefing [sic] strong pressure against colony, but we do believe Chinese may exploit any conspicuous 7th Fleet activities related to Hong Kong in near future. In fact, British Commodore has already drawn this conclusion, and we may expect special sensitivity, for a while at least, on this score.

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